

## CENSUS WORKERS OUT CATALOGING HOME ADDRESS INFORMATION

Critical first step  
for Census 2010

By MATT WILSON

Specially trained workers from the U.S. Census Bureau began walking the streets of Sunnyvale and other Santa Clara County cities on April 6 to catalog home address information in preparation for the 2010 Census.

Enumerators, or listers, began cross-referencing information needed for mailing census questionnaires to residents in March 2010. Census staff will canvass assigned blocks looking for current living quarters or any place where people potentially could live. They will compare the information they find to the census master address list displayed on hand-held computers carried in the field.

The information gathered is critical for making sure every household gets a census questionnaire next year.

"The primary goal of the census is to count everyone once, only once, and in the right place," said Tom Mesenbourg, acting director of the U.S. Census Bureau in a press statement. "Because the census is used for reapportioning seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and the distribution of more than \$300 billion in federal dollars every year to state and local governments, it's essential to get this first step right."

The process will likely wrap up in mid-June, according to Melissa Erickson, Santa Clara County Census 2010 project manager.

The census officially counts every person living in the U.S. once every 10 years. Approximately 50 federal programs rely on

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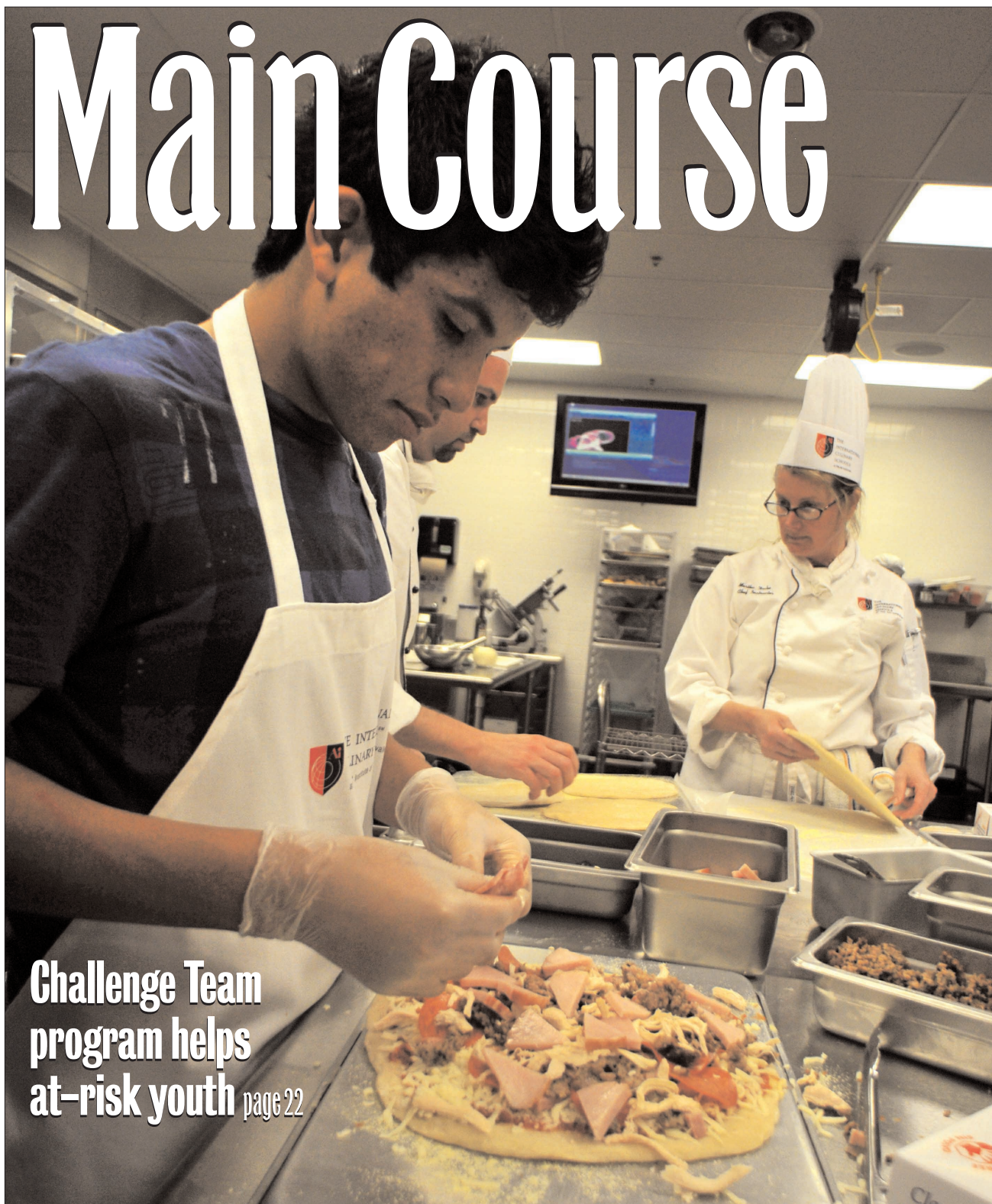
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# SUNNYVALE THE SUN

[www.sunnyvalesun.com](http://www.sunnyvalesun.com) Volume 17, Issue 13 April 8, 2009

## Main Course



Photograph by Neal Waters

**Challenge Team  
program helps  
at-risk youth** page 22

Rafael Cardoza carefully puts together his pizza during a Challenge Team cooking class at the Art Institute of California-Sunnyvale International Culinary School.





Mentor TN Fresh (left), and students Jeff Thomas (center) and Blaze Harrison load a fryer basket with parboiled potatoes during a Challenge Team cooking class.

# Recipe for Success

## Mentors give students the ingredients they need

By CODY KRAATZ

Photographs by NEAL WATERS

**P**ineapple, sautéed mushrooms, ham and Canadian bacon. Chicken, ground sausage, salami and olives.

Jade Harrison, 11, says she's making a pineapple and olive pizza—plus bacon, because she's pretty sure her mom would like that. She and five other at-risk Sunnyvale sixth-through 10th-graders stand around a stainless steel table at the Art Institute of California—Sunnyvale's International Culinary School, blank slates of pizza dough in front of them.

"They pretty much all made meat

lovers' pizzas," says chef Eric Frauwirth, the school's lead instructor. After the baking, he stands at a buffet in the middle of the institute's instructional restaurant, serving pizza slices as parents pick up salad and French fries—both prepared by the children, the latter at their insistence.

The youths' freshly honed cooking skills are being put to the test to culminate a 12-week program called Challenge Team. Organized by a group of educators, nonprofit groups, churches, city representa-

tives and others from the community, Challenge Team aims to bring positive influences into the lives of at-risk youth.

Dori Fontaine, a community services officer with the Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety's Crime Prevention Unit, hatched the plan to teach the youths to cook. She calls the team, which includes Frauwirth, a "simmering pot of ideas and resources."

### Lessons

The children have spent the past

four Tuesday nights in the culinary school's kitchen making meatballs, grilling salmon and learning to cook safely.

Their parents, meanwhile, have spent 12 consecutive Tuesday nights in a class taught by Jim Davis, Sunnyvale's lead neighborhood resource officer. Called Parent Project, the course aims to mend family bonds and address problem behaviors.

"I was hopeless and helpless and almost ready to give up," says Mary Jane Cabildo, whose daughter, Vic-

toria, 13, attends Sunnyvale Middle School. Through the class, though, she has learned to be patient and calm. She adds, "We're all here because we love our kids."

Rafael Cardoza, whose 15-year-old son Rafael is a sophomore at Homestead High School, says that the parents have experienced virtually all of the problem behaviors listed on large sheets of paper posted around the classroom: drug use, aggression, sexual promiscuity, defiance, disrespect, lack of motivation at school.



"I felt powerless," says Diana Harrison, Jade's mother. But she learned in the class that "it's not the child you control, it's the environment."

"We're giving the parents tools to be more effective with kids that are already exhibiting challenging behaviors," says Fontaine. "We're hoping that by bringing kids in and teaching them a skill, it will help their confidence so that they can show their parents, 'Look what we can do.'"

Low confidence and self-esteem, Davis tells the parents, are among the reasons young people join gangs, along with a poor sense of family, fear and poverty. He reminds them to focus on the problem, not the person.

Fontaine says that the program also breaks parents and children out of their usual routines and creates a space for change and dialogue.

## Dinner is served

As the parents walk into the school's restaurant, complete with mood lighting and white tablecloths, the space fills with an awkward silence. "Oh my God, I want to cry," says one mom as she takes her seat.

These families have spent weeks trying to close rifts that have grown for years. Those rifts clearly remain, but just as evident in the room is a desire to reconnect.

These students have learned more in the kitchen than how much sauce to put on a pizza so it doesn't fall apart. Sanika Utturkar, a soft-spoken 14-year-old eighth grader at Sunnyvale Middle School, says she has been more respectful to her parents and they, in turn, have had fewer "temper tantrums."

"It's really good at home," she says.

Jade, a fifth-grader at Garden Gate Elementary School in Cupertino, says that before these cooking lessons she could make eggs, pancakes and waffles—in a waffle maker.

Now, "I'll make stuffed bell peppers for my mom and my dad. But not for my brother," she says. Her brother, Blaze, is also in the class.

## Parent bonds

Diana Harrison, their mother, says that Blaze has been displaying the most problem behaviors, but through the parenting class she has picked up skills that help her be a more effective parent with both of her children.

Jade agrees. "They've been calmer," she says of her mom and dad.

Most of the six parents in Davis's class are single mothers, except for one married couple.

Davis expects the group of parents to meet independently for the final four sessions of the course. The parents will learn how to work in

groups, so that they have people they can refer to if they have problems in the future.

"They have a tremendous bond with each other," says Davis. He told the parents that he would come to their meetings if they invite him, but they have to take the initiative.

"We just don't want to put them out there like a ship in the ocean all by themselves, and then if a big storm comes they sink," he says.

This is the second session of Parent Project, and the plan is to start another session in the fall. Davis says he hopes to have a Spanish and an English class running concurrently, and again in the spring.

## At-risk

Bradley Militano, a neighborhood resource officer assigned to Sunnyvale Middle School and other schools, says that the most common way youths and parents are referred to Challenge Team is through his department.

Often, a youngster gets in trouble at school—getting in a fight, having drugs or weapons on campus—and Militano or another officer will respond. Because the juvenile justice system is supposed to be "restorative," he says, Challenge Team is a good option.

When the parents come to pick up their children, "they'll come to us with a certain desperation, a certain, 'I don't know what to do with my kids,'" he says.

One of those kids, Christa McAuliffe School sixth-grader Jeff Thomas, 12, found something he likes to do. His favorites were par-boiling and deep-frying potato wedges for the parents and "this guy," he says, patting culinary student TN Fresh on the arm. Jeff followed TN's every move that night.

"I never really gave back to little kids before," says TN, who, like the other student mentors who volunteered to help teach the youths on Tuesday nights, ran into trouble



Blaze Harrison (left) and Jeff Thomas dig into the pizza and fries they've cooked for their families at the Art Institute of California-Sunnyvale International Culinary School.

when he was growing up in New York.

"Sometimes kids just want to have fun. I was the same way. I focused on having more fun, growing up in the streets, tough love—that sort of thing. I don't think I qualify to be a role model," TN says, but he does have some advice for Jeff, whose father has not played an active role in his life for many years.

"Be responsible for what you do in life," he says, "and never make your parents sad."

For more information, visit [ChallengeTeam.inSunnyvale.com](http://ChallengeTeam.inSunnyvale.com).



Jade Harrison is taught the proper way to chop curly leaf parsley by her mentor, Dino, during a cooking class at the Art Institute of California-Sunnyvale International Culinary School.



The assembly line is in full swing as the Challenge mentors and their students pile their favorite toppings onto their pizzas.